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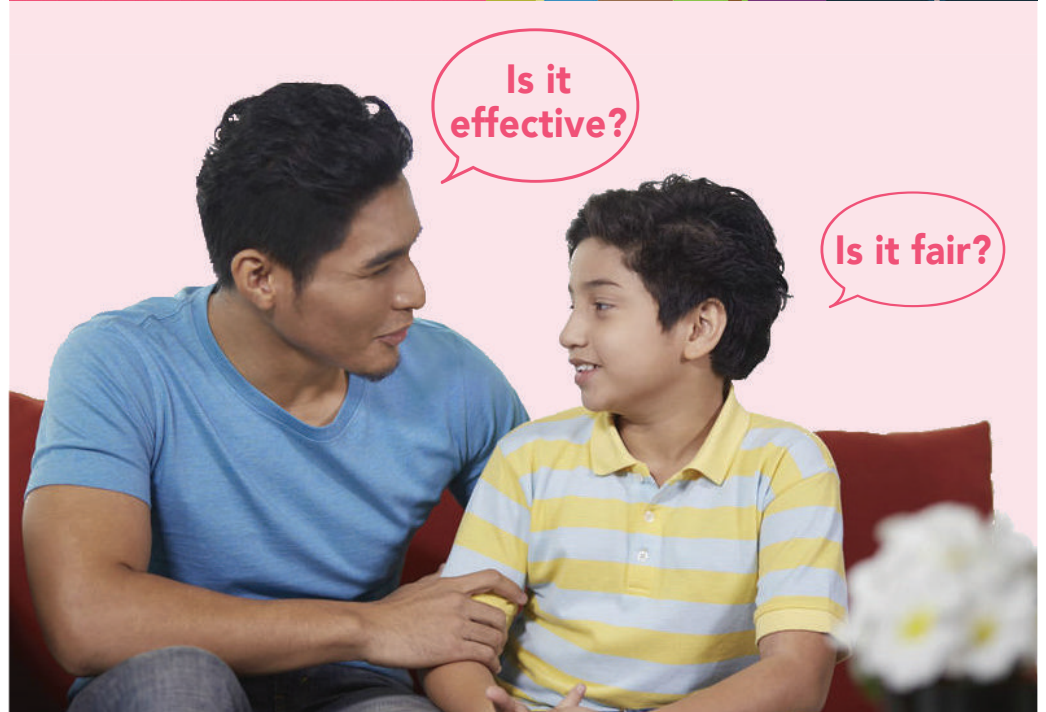
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THE PARENTING PROJECT

What do parents and children think about parents' use of *discipline*?



In 2005, we interviewed 533 parent-child pairs.

10- to 12-year-olds



And their father or mother

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What do parents and children think about parents' use of **discipline**? (continued)

Parents and children had similar views about the effectiveness of different types of discipline!

FAIR? UNFAIR?

Children also rated how fair they thought discipline practices were:

Images from Pikochart

Most effective

Explaining why it was wrong

Showing anger towards the child

Taking away privileges

Using physical punishment

Isolating the child

Telling the child he/she is not loved

Doing nothing

Least effective

FAIR

Explaining why it was wrong

NEUTRAL

Using physical punishment

UNFAIR

Telling the child he/she is not loved

Implications

Effective discipline is about guiding and explaining to children about their behaviours, and helping them learn what is expected of them.

Children felt that **emotional punishment** (e.g. telling a child he/she is not loved) was less fair than physical punishment, suggesting that emotional punishment is more upsetting than physical punishment to children.

Does School Type Matter?

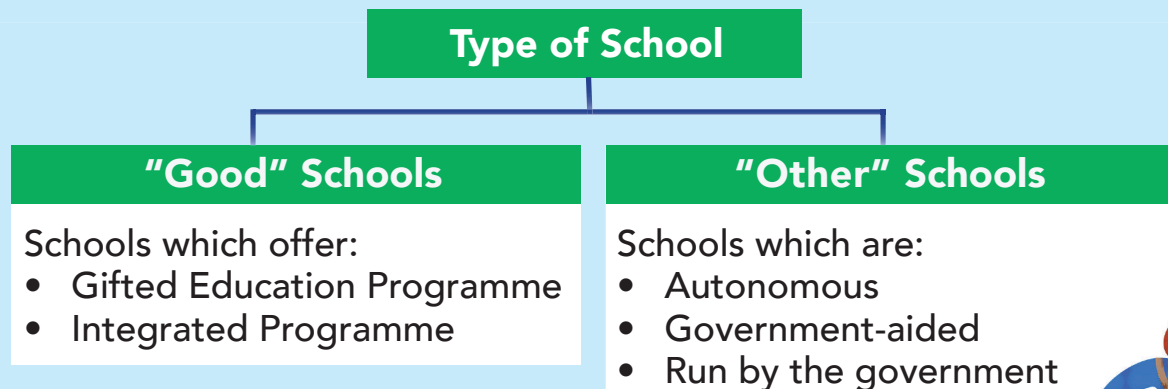
Does the **type of school** a child is currently attending influence parents' **educational aspirations** for their child?

To find out, we asked **parents** about their educational aspirations for their child.

- 300 students in P4 to P6
- 301 students in Sec 1 to Sec 4

Child's Current School

Children were classified according to the school the child was currently attending. School classification was based on academic programmes offered at the school.



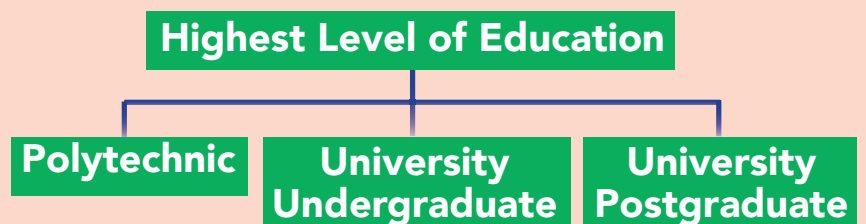
School Aspirations

Parents were asked to name the next school they wanted their child to attend.

Schools named were then categorised as "Good" or "Other" Schools.

Educational Aspirations

Parents were asked to report the highest level of education they wanted their child to achieve.



Does School Type Matter? *(continued)*

Does the **type of school** a child is currently attending influence parents' **educational aspirations** for their child?

Child's Current School

We compared parents with children in "good" schools vs "other" schools on their aspirations for their child.

Parents with children in
"good" schools were:



School Aspirations

More likely to want their child to attend a "good" school in the future.

Less likely to think that the type of school their child attends in the future "does not matter".



Educational Aspirations

More likely to want their child to complete postgraduate education.

More confident that their child would attain at least a university degree.



School Level and Aspirations

- Findings on school aspirations applied to both parents of primary and secondary school children.
- Findings on education aspirations applied only to parents of secondary school children.

Implications

Parents appear to believe that a child's school type limits the child's future schooling prospects. Changing this mindset is important to help children in "other" schools be more confident of their future prospects.



Sunbeam Place Study

In 2015, we examined the case files of children previously placed at Sunbeam Place. The aim was to understand the difficulties faced by the children when first placed there and what helped them adapt to the new living environment.

- 284 children
- Placed at Sunbeam Place between 2001 and 2013
- 2 to 16 years of age at the time of admission

Established in 1956 as the Convalescent Home for sick and malnourished children, Sunbeam Place is now the name of our residential home and place of safety for children aged 2 to 21 years.

Family Difficulties

Family difficulties faced by children at the time of admission included:

- Absent parent and/or step families
- Family-related mental health issues
- Domestic violence
- Alcohol and/or drug use
- Family financial problems



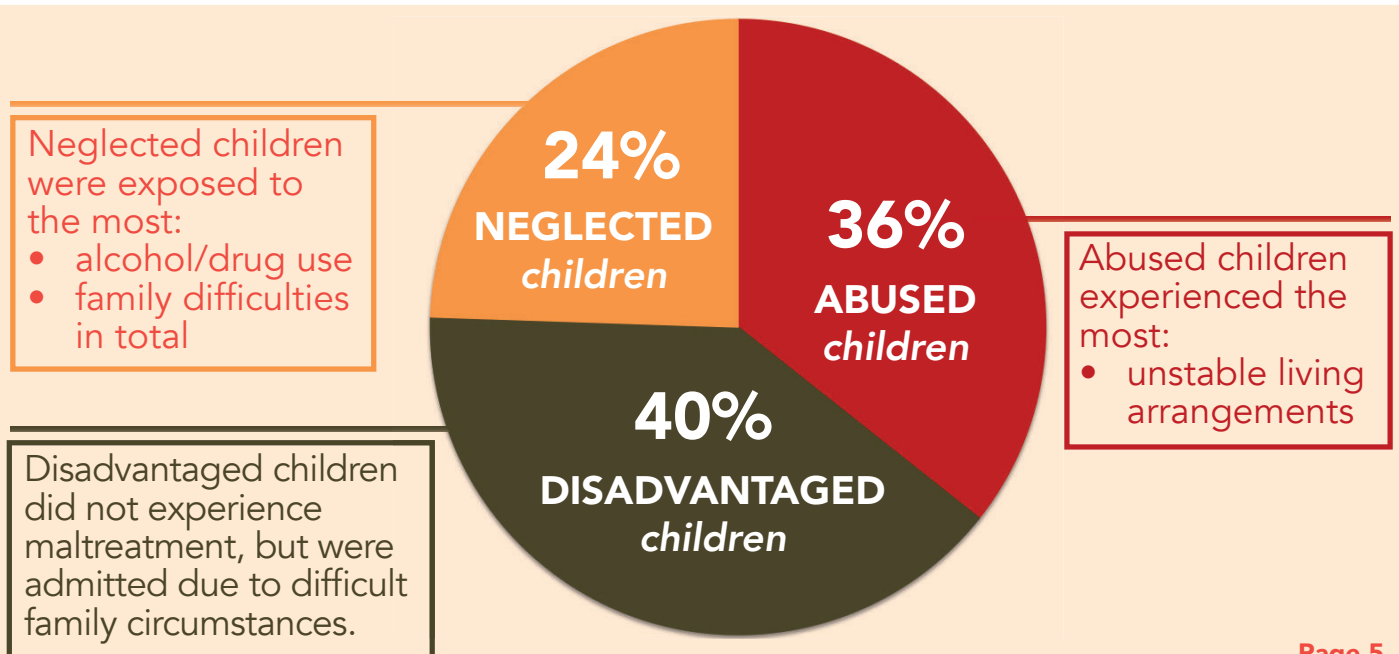
Child difficulties faced by children at the time of admission included:

- Learning difficulties
- Behavioural problems
- Child mental health issues
- Unstable living arrangements



Child Difficulties

Difficulties faced upon admission into Sunbeam Place differed for abused, neglected, and disadvantaged children



Sunbeam Place Study *(continued)*

What helped?

Family support helped to buffer some challenges associated with moving into a new environment. This included:

- Having positive contact with their family
- Having a sibling in Sunbeam Place

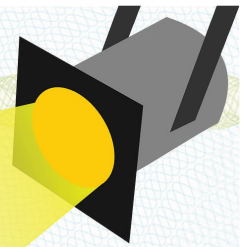
Implications

1. Help provided to these groups of children should target the problems that they are facing.
2. Facilitating more quality family contact might be important in helping children cope better in a new living environment.

Spotlight!

Research Grant Recipient

Ms Ang Seow Li was a recipient of the Singapore Children's Society Research Grant in 2012. She was a Psychology student at the National University of Singapore and completed this study as her Honours Thesis.



Does early informal education promote literacy skills and school readiness?

Participants

124 children enrolled in Kingergarten 2 (K2)

Parents reported the age at which their child started *informal education* (e.g., nursery and toddler class), which varied from 1.5 to 4 years of age. *Informal education* referred to enrollment in a full-day 7am-to-7pm programme for at least 4 days of the week.

Outcome measures



Literacy Skills



Social Skills



Emotional maturity



Communication skills



General Knowledge

Findings

After controlling for maternal education, it was found that the earlier children started informal education, the better their **literacy skills** were at 6 years of age (K2). But starting informal education earlier did not predict better social skills, emotional maturity, communication skills, or general knowledge at K2.

Implications

Starting informal education earlier may provide preschool children with more learning opportunities, thereby facilitating the development of their literacy skills.



SINGAPORE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY'S RESEARCH

Besides the studies featured in Research Bites, we also conduct other research.



We embarked on our first research study on Child Abuse and Neglect in 1994.

Since then, we have initiated 17 studies. Our research covers the following areas:

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Our research in issues relating to children and youth helps us identify potential areas for intervention:

- Resilience (forthcoming)
- Children's Self Concept & Aspirations (2016)
- Children's Social & Emotional Well-Being (2008)

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT (CAN)

To understand Singaporeans' perception of CAN, we surveyed members of the public and professionals:

- Changing Professionals' Perceptions (2011)
- Changing Public Perceptions (2010)
- Professional Perceptions of CAN (1997)
- Public Perceptions of CAN (1994)

BULLYING

We explored trends related to bullying and its effects on victims in the following studies:

- Impact of Cyber Environments on Adolescents (ongoing)
- Young Adult Recall of Bullying (2010)
- Bullying in Primary Schools (2007)
- Bullying in Secondary Schools (2006)

PARENTING

Research studies relating to caregiving and parenting practices among families in Singapore:

- Longitudinal Study on Infant Attachment (ongoing)
- The Parenting Project (2006)

PRACTICE RESEARCH

Studies initiated by practitioners or our management which directly inform our practice:

- Contact between Inmates (2017)
- Compulsory Education Casework (2011 & 2016)
- Sunbeam Place (2015)

Singapore Children Society's Research Grant

Since 1992, the Singapore Children's Society has awarded over 90 research grants to students conducting research related to children, youth, and families. For more information, visit www.childrensociety.org.sg/research-grants.

A Note from 65th Anniversary Committee Chairman

Welcome to a new issue of Research Bites. This year marks a special milestone in the journey of the Singapore Children's Society — we're turning 65! To celebrate, we'll be holding our 65th Anniversary Conference on 24 and 25 November 2017.

At the conference, there will be a *Singapore Children's Society Lecture* which will be delivered by Minister Chan Chun Sing, and a forum for children, **What Makes You Shine**. In addition, there will be a *public forum* entitled **Rethinking Success**. This public forum finds its roots in our research study, **Schools and the Class Divide**, where we investigate how school stratification shapes children's self-concept and aspirations. Our findings reflect current societal concerns about the overemphasis of academic achievement and highlight the need to consider a broader definition of success. At the conference, we hope to lead the public in a constructive discussion of what constitutes success.

All are welcome to join us at our conference come November (details below). We hope our readers enjoy this special issue of Research Bites. More details on this Conference can be found on our website www.childrensociety.org.sg

Event: **Singapore Children's Society 65th Anniversary Conference**

Date: **24 and 25 November 2017**

Venue: **NTUC Centre Level 7 Auditorium**

One Marina Boulevard, Singapore 018989

Professor Ho Lai Yun
Chairman, 65th Anniversary Committee



Research Bites, Singapore Children's Society's bi-annual research newsletter, aims to make research findings more accessible to interested members of the public and professionals working with children. With its easily digestible visual format, **Research Bites** aims to acquaint readers with our research — both completed and in progress — and research-related information. **Research Bites** is available at www.childrensociety.org.sg/research-bites.

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